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Approved For Release 2002/08/20 : CIA-RDP79T00865A002100080002-0

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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

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Soviet Position on Spanish
Sahara Antagonizes Rabat

The pro-Algerian position Moscow has recently adopted toward the Spanish Sahara dispute has led to a deterioration in Soviet-Moroccan relations.

In the UN, the Soviets have sided with Algeria's view that the Spanish Sahara question should be resolved by granting self-determination to the colony's inhabitants. Soviet UN representative Malik--with an obvious eye on King Hassan's threatened mass march into the territory--has urged "restraint and moderation" on the concerned parties. *Pravda* also weighed in on behalf of Algiers earlier this week in its first commentary on the Saharan situation. The brief article pointed out that the UN General Assembly has twice voted for the right of self-determination for the territory's people and voiced Moscow's opposition to any efforts to deny them this right.



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To show displeasure over the Soviet position, King Hassan has canceled the visit of a Soviet delegation that was to put the final touches on a major Soviet-Moroccan phosphates agreement, according to a Moroccan Foreign Ministry official.

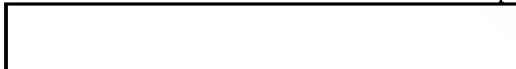
Moscow's tilt toward Algeria has probably not come easily. The Soviets have had their problems with Algeria's espousal of Third World causes, and they have made some effort over the last year to

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strengthen ties with Morocco. They are particularly interested in the development and purchase of Moroccan phosphates, which have become an important supplement to the USSR's sagging domestic production and may take on more importance if this year's crop failure leads to even further Soviet emphasis on fertilizers.



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[REDACTED] Nothing of what he said in Lisbon will sit well with the men in the Kremlin, but Moscow may elect to avoid a direct response. In the past, the Soviets have preferred to increase pressure behind the scenes in an attempt to block Ceausescu's offensive.

For his part, Ceausescu has been unusually adept at gauging the limits of Soviet tolerance. He apparently judges that the advantages to be gained still outweigh the risks of possible Soviet counteraction. Indeed, he may perceive that he can get at least tacit support from some of his East European allies. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Polish government leaders offered practically the same counsel to the Portuguese during the recent visit to Warsaw by President Costa Gomes. Moreover, the Yugoslavs [REDACTED] told Lisbon that Belgrade does not favor Portugal's withdrawal from NATO, nor does it endorse the reluctance of the Portuguese Communist Party to share power with centrist parties. [REDACTED]

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Ceausescu Warns Portuguese Against Soviets

Romanian President Ceausescu has bluntly warned the Portuguese Revolutionary Council against turning Portugal over to the Communist Party and thus to Soviet control.



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Ceausescu's denunciation of Moscow was foreshadowed in his public toast to Prime Minister Azevedo shortly after his arrival in Lisbon. At that time he drew a parallel between Portugal's current problems and those that once faced Bucharest, and recommended that all political parties--including elements of the bourgeoisie--work together.

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